

A QUEER ADVENTURE

By Alvah Jordan Garth.

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"Going back home, are you Earl?"
Inquired Clyde Forrest of his cousin.

"Yes," came the sharp, somewhat irritable response. "I'm going back to Dunham thoroughly cured of my fancy for roving. I'll put what is left of my \$200 in the bank. I wish I had never drawn it out. I'm going to



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buckle down to work and keep right on my old plodding sensible program. My high and lofty ideas have taken a drop, I can tell you!"

Earl Bartley acted and felt somewhat ruffled. His story was simple. He had lived at Dunham all his life. His father had left him a small but steady real estate and insurance business. There were no big profits, but the regular collection of rents for clients and some notary public business resulted in a fairly good added income,

Earl "had a girl." Mary Evans was pretty, popular, and best of all, practical. Earl earned enough to dress well and take Mary to the occasional entertainments Dunham afforded. His father had left him the family horse, but slow and old now. Also a buggy that had seen its best days. Mary declared that she enjoyed a drive on a safe basis. Whenever some of the more fortunate young bloods of Dunham dashed by with their automobiles, however, Earl felt chagrined and behind the times.

"It's not justice to a nice girl like Mary to ask her out with slow poky old Dobbin," ruminated Earl. "Wish I had an automobile. I could get around fast and double my business. Wish I was making more money."

Then he had a visit from his cousin Clyde who lived at Rowland. That town was having a boom. There were possible grand openings for an enterprising young man, so Earl left his business temporarily in charge of an assistant and went down to explore conditions at Rowland.

It took Earl a month to find out that whatever there was of good property chances had been already cornered by wide-awake residents of the town. It took him another month to discover that the cause of the boom, the report that two large industries were going to locate at Rowland, was false. The bottom of the boom fell out. Then came a plaintive letter from Mary. She missed him, she was lonely—"come home."

"Well," said Clyde, "live and learn. You've had a rest and some experience, anyway."

"I've had my nonsensical ambition knocked clear out of me," retorted Earl. "I fancy home-faring life is the best. Good-bye."

All Earl thought of under the influence of the pathetic letter from Mary, was to get back home and buckle down to hard work along the old lines.

It was two miles from the home of